

NATIVE SPEAKER STANDARD ENGLISH VERSUS ENGLISH AS A LINGUA FRANCA Where would Shakespeare stand?

THOMAS CHRISTIANSEN

Abstract – Sceptics of the utility of studies into ELF (English as Lingua Franca) typically dismiss it as a kind of “Broken English”: a “degrammaticalised” code akin to a so-called pidgin. The implication is that ELF variations are only explicable in terms of interlanguages (Selinker 1972) and ELF users are merely L2 learners who fail to achieve full competence and who involuntarily mix elements from their L1 with the target language. In essence, according to this view, ELF users’ major failing is their inability to replicate Native Speaker Standard English sufficiently well. By contrast, scholars specialising in ELF emphasise, among other things (such as the rights of ELF users to negotiate their own norms), how the notion of the existence of a single, immutable standard is highly questionable (Seidlhofer 2011). As many descriptive, as opposed to prescriptive, linguists of all persuasions have pointed out, a key feature of any linguistic system is its power to generate new structures and forms and generally to be creative, which of course is a central factor in linguistic change and the evolution of languages in general (Seidlhofer, Widdowson 2009). Indeed, according to Widdowson (2015), the emphasis of ELF is not the *variety* of a homogenous speech community but of the *variations* that spontaneously emerge when speakers of different L1s communicate with each other. In this chapter, we will examine the English of William Shakespeare, the “nation’s bard” (Hudson 2008) and a figure often appropriated by prescriptionists as an exemplar of the beauty and power of the English *language* (rigorously in the singular). We analyse Shakespeare’s English as an example of a variation of English in order to illustrate how processes such as adaptation and accommodation together with strategies such as translanguaging (García and Li 2014), inherent in ELF, are neither new nor foreign and can be found in native speaker variations of English, even those which enjoy the highest artistic prestige.

Keywords: ELF; linguistic creativity; linguistic variation; Standard English; translanguaging.

1. Introduction

It has become almost a platitude to define English as an international language used as the default for medium for communication of all kinds (see for example: Christiansen 2016a, 2017; Chevillet 1994, Crystal 2003; Graddol 1998, 2010; McArthur 1998). However, as Seidlhofer (2005, p. 339)

points out, there is a need to distinguish between English when it is used for both international and intranational communication, that is, also between native speakers, and when it is used specifically between speakers of languages other than English (i.e. non-native speakers) and for which *English as a Lingua Franca* (ELF) is widely accepted as the most appropriate term.

Treating the English used between non-native speakers of English as anything other than a defective interlanguage, an imperfect copy of the native speaker “original”, has met with opposition from many traditionalists who refuse to accept that ELF may constitute a legitimate form of English in its own right. Seidlhofer (2011, pp. 28-63) presents a comprehensive critique of the nativeness principle (the idea that non-native speakers should emulate native speakers) on both theoretical and ethical grounds. Citing numerous other scholars, she establishes that the concept of nativeness constitutes a dogma: rarely challenged yet ill-defined, and which is of limited use when seeking to understand in particular ELF.¹ She also argues that ELF users, whether NES (Native English Speakers) or NNES (Non-Native English Speakers), deserve the same rights to set their own norms as do NES using English as a Native Language (ENL) because firstly they constitute the majority and secondly because ELF variations must evolve to reflect their needs, concerns and goals when communicating. Furthermore, Seidlhofer questions the utility of the concept of Standard seeing that it represents an ideal rather than an actual variety and is grounded in the idea of stability and fixedness, which runs very much counter to linguistic reality.²

Following this line, numerous scholars³ have studied the phenomenon of ELF and regrettably, their position has come to be contested in some quarters by those who advocate the more traditional approach, according to which, English is only English when it is spoken by an NES and where it conforms to the norms of the so-called Standard at that: a position which we will refer to here as NES Standard.

Regarding this controversy, examination of the works of Shakespeare (1564-1616) may be revealing as he is often regarded as one of the greatest figures, if not *the* greatest figure, in English literature. He is universally

¹ For a summary of her arguments, see Christiansen (2018).

² According to Widdowson (2015, p. 363): “Variety status is achieved when variations become conventionalized and so settle into what is taken to be a systematic state, in other words, when variation is taken to be regularized to the extent that it constitutes language change. But since language is, as Labov and the complexity theorists have made abundantly clear, intrinsically variable, dynamic, emergent, continuously in flux, the identification of a variety depends on supposing that variation is in a state of suspended animation. In other words, it is an ideal construct, a convenient fiction.”

³ To name but a few: Firth, House, Jenkins, Mauranen, Seidlhofer, and Widdowson.

acclaimed as a master of his native language, English,⁴ someone whose qualities as a writer and wordsmith can be agreed by those on both sides of the NES Standard vs. ELF debate. Revealingly, the expression “the language of Shakespeare” is often used to refer to the English language as a whole, in particular in its most beautiful and artful manifestations.

Of course, we cannot know directly what Shakespeare’s attitudes were to the idea of a standard variety or how he viewed the way non-native speakers spoke English (as an inhabitant of London, he would have had the opportunity to have regular contact with people from other parts of England, Great Britain, and also from the Continent – for example, France, the Low Countries, Spain, Portugal, Italy – and even further afield such as Africa or South Asia). Even if we were to find some of his opinions on the matter preserved in some document, it would (apart from being a monumental find given how few documents other than his works that we actually have relating to him) be largely irrelevant to our purposes here, as people’s professed attitudes and their behavior may often be at odds (see Christiansen 2017 on attitudes to ELF).

More usefully, we can look at the language he uses in those of his works that we have copies of and see what this can tell us about whether in his observable linguistic behaviour he fits more naturally within the NES Standard or the ELF camp.

2. Contrasting ELF with NES Standard English

To ascertain whether Shakespeare’s language adheres either to a NES Standard model or an ELF model, we can refer to Seidlhofer’s summary of the conceptual differences between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and ELF, as the description that Seidlhofer provides for Foreign Language (EFL) is suitable also for what we have chosen to call NES Standard. This is no coincidence because EFL, traditionally seen, is a model based on NES Standard which L2 learners are expected to emulate: the same process popularly known as the nativeness principle as mentioned above. In Table 1, we reproduce Seidlhofer’s summary, for reasons of clarity replacing her title for column two “Foreign Language (EFL)”, with “NES Standard”.

⁴ Such mystery surrounds the actual life and person of Shakespeare that it has been argued that the author (or authors indeed) of his works only used the name “Shakespeare” as a pseudonym and was in reality various other people including the Earl of Oxford, Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, or even Elizabeth I (over 80 candidates have been proposed – see Gross 2010). Some have even argued that he was a foreign born and thus not an L1 English speaker, for example, Giovanni Florio, one Michelangelo Crollalanza, Sheik Zubayr bin William or indeed Miguel de Cervantes. If Shakespeare really were an L2 English speaker and originally from somewhere outside the English-speaking areas of the British Isles, it would of course be a delicious irony in the context of debate about the merits of ELF, but it is, in any case, highly unlikely.

	NES Standard	Lingua Franca (ELF)
Linguacultural norms	pre-existing, re-affirmed	ad hoc, negotiated
Objectives	integration, membership in NES community	Intelligibility, communication in a NNES or mixed NNES-NES interaction
Processes	imitation, adoption	accommodation, adaption

Table 1

Conceptual Differences between EFL and ELF (Seidlhofer 2011, p. 18) with “English as a Foreign Language (EFL)” replaced by “NES Standard”.

In the subsections below we go through the three rows of the table examining whether Shakespeare’s English fits more easily in the NES Standard column or the ELF one.

2.1. *Linguacultural norms*

Shakespeare was presumably writing for a NES audience but in his time the concept of Standard was very different to that of today because, although norms for English were starting to come into being for official use for public administration,⁵ English had only come to enjoy the status as predominant language in England a relatively short time before.⁶ Furthermore, until printed material became cheap and easily available, which since the introduction of mechanical movable type printing was becoming the case, the language consisted of a range of different varieties, with very different lexis, grammars and pronunciations, and, in the written language alternate spellings abounded.⁷ Shakespeare, in particular, was writing at a time when English was undergoing radical transformations in its transition from its Middle to Early Modern incarnations. Some of these changes, in particular with lexis, have been attributed to Shakespeare himself.

Because of this, it can be convincingly argued that, in Table 1, Shakespeare’s variation of English fits more naturally into the ELF cell on the

⁵ According to Bailey (1991, p.3) “Far from a nineteenth-century image, *standard* was applied to prestige varieties of a language as early as 1711, and then the term merely codified a notion already old. Before that, by the end of the sixteenth century, the phrase *King’s English* had come into use to label normative forms if not actual royal usage”.

⁶ During the Middle English period (1100-1450. according to Graddol 1998, p. 7), as a consequence of the Norman Conquest, the status of English declined and had been largely replaced among those in power by French.

⁷ This is evident in the works and writings of Shakespeare himself. On the six surviving documents agreed by most to contain his signature, he spells ‘William’ in four different ways and ‘Shakespeare’ in no less than five.

table as regards linguacultural norms since it constitutes a case where norms are ad hoc and negotiated rather than pre-existing or re-affirmed. Evidence for this comes from the fact that Shakespeare is, by today's standards, eclectic, if not to say sometimes inconsistent, in his choice of forms.

For example, he uses both 'ye' / 'you' (the former, so traditional grammarians would have believed, the object form: the latter, the subject) apparently interchangeably:

- 1) Hang **ye**, gorbellied knaves, are **ye** undone? No, **ye** fat chuffs;
I would your store were here! On, bacons, on! What, **ye** knaves!
Young men must live. **You** are grand-jurors, are **ye**? We'll jure **ye**, faith.
(*Henry IV Pt 1*)

In Example 1, Shakespeare appears to favour *ye* over *you* as a second person plural pronoun even as a subject. There is one case of 'you' however, which forms part of a question-tag structure. Revealingly, in the tag itself, the *ye* form is used, not *you* again. Of course, the one case of *you* may be put down to an oversight on his part or even on the part of the compositor doing the typesetting.⁸ It is also possible that in some of these cases, Shakespeare is using *you* as a stressed and *ye* as an unstressed form (i.e. rather like a contemporary writer may, using a colloquialism, write "y'know" for the unstressed 'you' in "you know").

In other cases, Shakespeare seems to use interchangeably 'you' and 'thou' and related forms such as *ye*, *thine*, *your*, *thysel* for second person singular thus ignoring the convention dating from Norman times under the influence of French that *thou* should be used as a *T-form* and *you* a *V-form*.⁹

- 2) PRINCE. [comes forward] Peace, **ye** fat-guts! Lie down, lay **thine** ear close to the ground and list if **thou** canst hear the tread of travellers.

(*Henry IV Pt 1*)

⁸ It must be borne in mind that compositors would often adapt the text that they had been given to set to fit into the layout of the page (for example add or remove letters to make lines fit in the space available or maybe substitute some letters for others or use apostrophes for the same reason or merely because they had run out of that particular character). Studies have been done specifically into the typesetting of the *First Folio*, with scholars trying to discover which of the nine different identified compositors worked on a particular section of the text (see the work of Charlton Hinman, inventor of the "Hinman Collator", editor of the *Shakespeare Quarto Facsimiles* and *The Norton Facsimile: The First Folio of Shakespeare*).

⁹ Simplifying somewhat, T-forms refer to addressees with whom the addressor is on familiar terms; V-forms to those to whom, for whatever reason (and in different cultural contexts different factors may come into play), the addressor wants to show respect: see Brown and Gilman (1960).

In Example 2, in the same line, Prince Henry addresses Falstaff initially with ‘you’ (*ye*) and subsequently with ‘thou’ (*thine, thou*). By Shakespeare’s time, ‘thou’ was becoming archaic (although it was used extensively in the *King James Bible* of 1611),¹⁰ but he used it frequently (by our count, *thee, thine, thou, thy* and *thyselſ* together occur 14,318 in his collected plays and sonnets).¹¹ It could be argued that the change from ‘you’ to ‘thou’ in Example 2 is the sign of a deteriorating relationship between addressor and addressee,¹² but this seems barely plausible when the initial *ye* is accompanied by an insult “fat guts”, indicating that the relationship has already taken a turn for the worse, and the switch to *thine* comes so soon after: only half a dozen words.

The co-occurring equivalent forms function rather like synonyms, which can be equated to translation at an intralingual level.¹³ This mixing of different synonymous forms can thus be seen as involving similar processes to *translanguaging* (which we shall discuss further below in Section 2.3), where words, phrases or underlying structures from one language may be used within another. Such switching is also apparent elsewhere in Shakespeare with other grammatical forms. Most importantly perhaps, the way he constructs questions and negatives.

In Middle English, questions, as in most European languages today, including the Romance and the other Germanic, were formed by inverting subject and verb (e.g. “think you?”). Similarly, the negative involved putting the negative particle after the verb (e.g. “you think not”). In Shakespeare’s time, the current form involving employment of *supplementary do*¹⁴ emerged, at least in the written language.¹⁵

¹⁰ “During Early Modern English, the distinction between subject and object uses of *ye* and *you* gradually disappeared, and *you* became the norm in all grammatical functions and social situations. *Ye* continued in use, but by the end of the 16th century it was restricted to archaic, religious, or literary contexts. By 1700, the *thou* forms were also largely restricted in this way.” See Crystal (1995, p. 71)

¹¹ Compared to 21,154 for various forms of ‘you’. Some of these latter will of course be second person plural, where ‘thou’ would not be used. Some indication of the relative proportion of ‘thou’ to ‘you’ for second-person singular can be gleaned by comparing the figures specifically for *thyselſ* and *yourself* (which, as opposed to *yourselves*, is unequivocally singular): 197 vs. 280, indicating, by this simple gauge at least, that Shakespeare uses ‘thou’ for second person singular approximately 41.30% of the time.

¹² See Crystal and Crystal (2008).

¹³ See Jakobson (1959) who distinguishes between translation which is intralingual (paraphrase) and interlingual (translation proper) as well as intersemiotic (transmutation).

¹⁴ For this term and a discussion of *supplementary do*’s features see Christiansen (2002).

¹⁵ Traditionally, this structure has been seen as a relatively late development in Middle English, arising out of the causative structure “he did them a castle build” (i.e. in contemporary English, “he had a castle built for them”) – see Barber 1993, pp. 188-191. More recently, some, including Van der Auwera and Genee (2002) and McWhorter (2008), have argued that it owes its origins

As with the second person pronouns, Shakespeare can be seen to mix the two forms: inversion and addition of *not* to the lexical verb; or the use of *dummy 'do'* in questions and negatives functioning syntactically as an auxiliary. For example, looking at negatives, and taking the example of one verb, we find that in his surviving works, Shakespeare uses the various forms of “doubt not” (i.e. ‘doubt’ and its various inflections: *doubt/doubts/doubted/doubt'st*) 35 times and “do not doubt” (with the various forms of ‘doubt’) 11 times: an approximate ratio of three to one.

In part, this can be explained by the fact that changes in Shakespeare’s language reflect the changes in the English language as a whole during his lifetime. It is indeed possible to see how his use of the more modern form increases over time and his employment of the more archaic form correspondingly decreases, providing that the chronology of Shakespeare works that we adopt is accurate. The actual order in which Shakespeare’s works were actually written or first performed (as opposed to published) is often a matter of conjecture and is the source of much dispute among scholars. Here, we adopt the chronology cited by Mabillard (2000).

On Figure 1, we show occurrences of ‘doubt’ plus ‘not’ and for “do not doubt” calculated by us using concordance software, *AntConc 3.4.4w* (Anthony 2014), according to the year in which the work they come in was written. Mabillard narrows down the date of writing for each work to within a two year period (e.g. *Romeo and Juliet* 1594-5), to simplify, on Figure 1 below, we just cite the first of these (e.g. the data for *Romeo and Juliet* is put under the heading of 1594). It should also be pointed out that 1610 does not appear on the x axis because, in the chronology used here, there are no works dating from this year. The figures are weighted according to how much Shakespeare wrote in the same period. For example, the number given on Figure 1 for occurrences of “doubt not” in 1591 (the year in which Mabillard argues that he wrote *Henry IV* parts 2 and 3) is 1.21. This is the number of actual occurrences (6) divided by the number of words in the aforementioned works (49.733), multiplied by 10,000, this latter being an arbitrary figure chosen merely to magnify the number so to avoid figures which contain too many zeros after the decimal point and which are difficult to elaborate and consequently to present on graphs.

to Celtic languages and may have existed as a spoken form as long before as the Old English period, mainly in the speech of a sizeable British (Celtic) underclass in Anglo Saxon England.

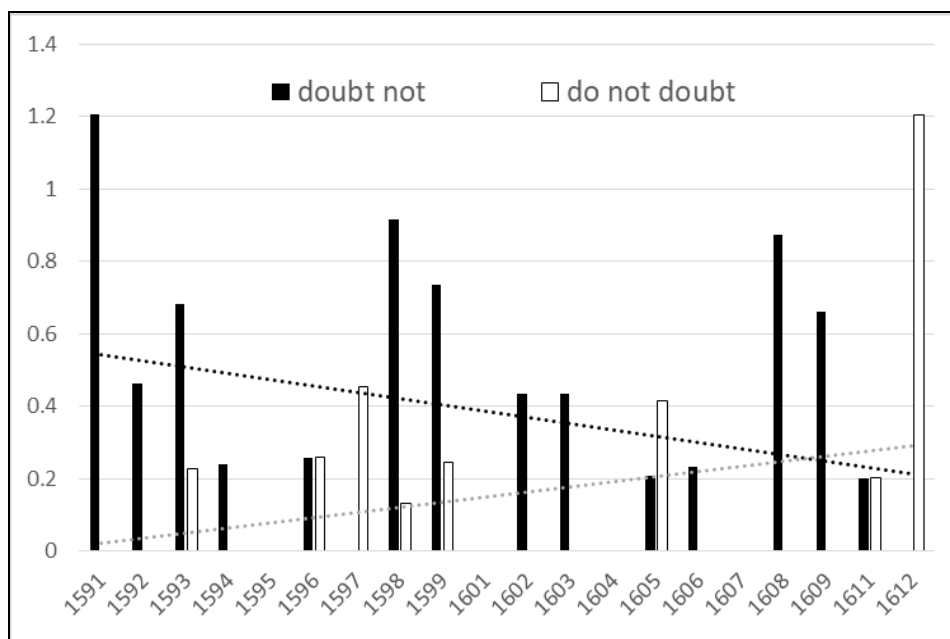


Figure 1

Number of words per year divided by occurrences of ‘doubt’ + ‘not’ versus ‘do not’ + ‘doubt’.

Looking at the *trend lines* (or *lines of best fit*) for “doubt not” (black dashes) and “do not doubt” (grey dashes), it can be seen how, as the former, older form gradually decreases over Shakespeare’s 21-year writing career, the newer form gradually increases, the two lines being almost symmetrical. That there is a rise in use of the modern form over time is to be expected – and indeed, to a degree, some scholars have based their chronologies also on the linguistic characteristics of the text: precisely the occurrence of certain more archaic or more modern forms (together with historical evidence in general such as mentions in documents or eye witness accounts).

The regular pattern seen on Figure 1 for “doubt not” and “do not doubt” is not a one-off and a trend line at a very similar rate of increase emerges when look at figures, using *AntConc* 3.4.4w (Anthony 2014) again, for occurrences of “do not” in its various forms for all verbs across the same Shakespeare chronology and using the same weighting system (Figure 2):

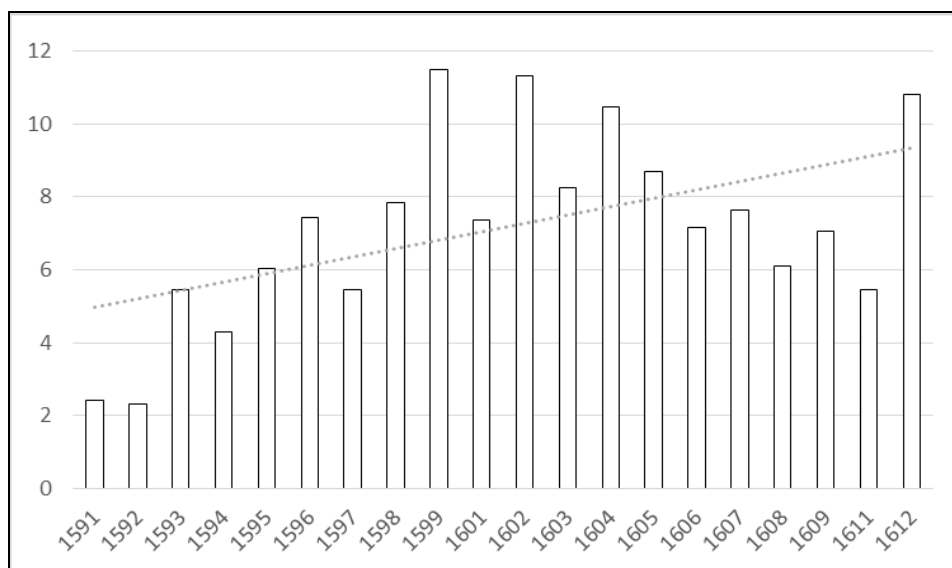


Figure 2
Number of words per year divided by occurrences of verbal negation with “do not” + lexical verb.

Another change in English happening at the time that Shakespeare was writing and which is visible in his works is the gradual decline of third person forms ending in *-eth* and their replacement by the so called *third person 's'*, the latter being an innovation that had started in Northern varieties of Middle English.¹⁶ This is illustrated on Figure 3 using the same software (Anthony 2014) and weighting system as in the previous two graphs. Here we use the verb ‘have’ as an exemplar of this trend, because as well as being a very common verb, which can be used both as an auxiliary and as a lexical verb (e.g. in the sense of possess), both of the forms *hath* and *has* are monosyllabic, meaning that whether one or the other is used has no effect on the meter, which is an important consideration with Shakespeare, whose plays are typically in blank verse (unrhymed iambic pentameter).¹⁷

¹⁶ See for example Culpeper (1997, p. 55).

¹⁷ For example *oweth* would be disyllabic, *owes* monosyllabic, so one might be used rather than another for reasons of meter as in “Such dutie as the Subject **owes** / Even such a woman **oweth** to her husband” (*The Taming of the Shrew*) – Example from Salmon and Burness (1987, p. 350).

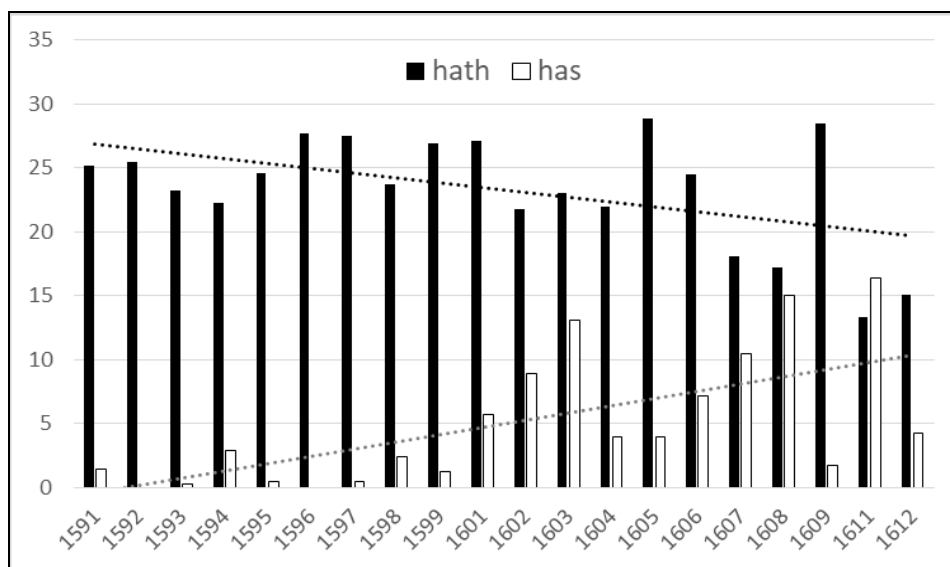


Figure 3
Number of words per year divided by occurrences of *hath* vs. *has*.

By contrast, an examination of *hast*, the archaic second person singular form, using the same concordancer (Anthony 2014), shows that Shakespeare is more reluctant to replace it by the more modern form *have*. On Figure 4, the trendline for *hast* drops only slightly, much less than that for *hath*, for example.

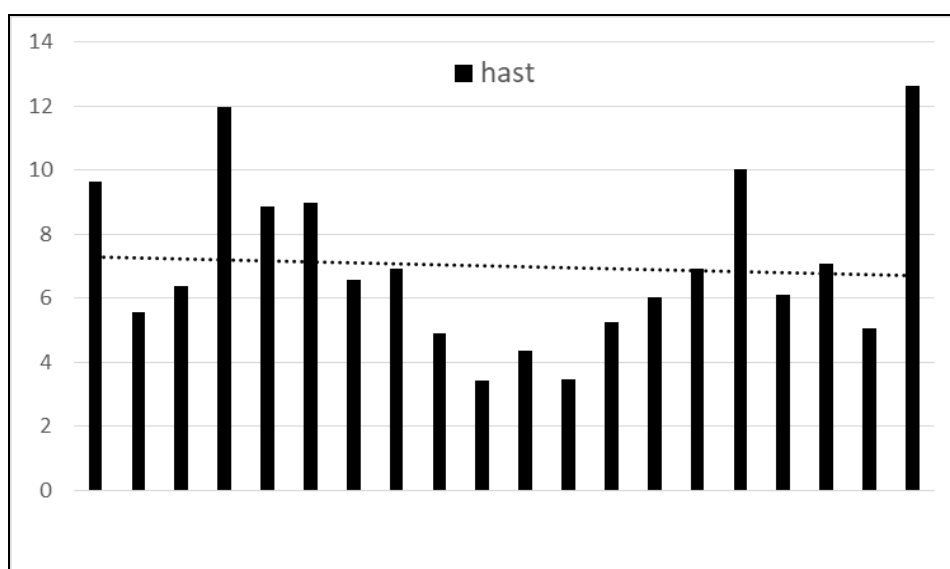


Figure 4
Number of words per year divided by occurrences of *hast*.

Figure 4 shows that linguistic change, especially on the part of an individual speaker, is rarely uniform, and the actual rate may differ from item and item and depend on diverse factors. For example the use of *hast* is linked also to

use of *thou*. As we point out above, Shakespeare seems fond of this archaic form and so it would seem rational of him to continue to use *hast* too, as the two go naturally together. The fact that ‘have’ is also both a primary auxiliary and a common lexical verb may also be relevant as it is often the most frequently used linguistic forms that change the most slowly, precisely because they are always in use and ingrained in linguistic habit.

Some scholars see in the distribution of older and more modern forms in Shakespeare’s works and, in particular, the gradual greater use of the latter, a sign not that Shakespeare is following the same trends as the rest of the speech community but rather that he is to a degree a trendsetter. As his confidence as a writer grows, so does his willingness to experiment both with dramatic genres and also with language.¹⁸ In the same way, that he was not afraid to depart from the Aristotelian unities or from the rigorous distinction between tragedy and comedy, Shakespeare learnt to mix old and new linguistic forms, formal and colloquial language in a fashion that shows that, even if such a thing as a standard had existed at his time, in all likelihood he would not have been diligent about adhering to it.

Evidence for this is also found in the fact that Shakespeare’s works are the source of a considerable number of new words in the English language.¹⁹ Many have taken this to mean that Shakespeare was one of the greatest innovators ever in terms of English lexis, which perhaps he was. However, one can never be sure how many of the words first found in Shakespeare were actually his creations. At the very least, even if he just happens to be the oldest recorded source for many Elizabethan terms (and it must be remembered that there is no trace of much literature and drama of the time),²⁰

¹⁸ See, for example, Salmon and Burness (1987, p. 350): “What is apparent [...] is that in the earlier plays we see the effects of a variety of traditional influences on the young playwright, influences that advocated a sharp line of distinction between the language of literature and the language of conversation. The sixteen later plays, on the other hand, reveal a more mature Shakespeare unfettered by any rigid principle or attitude, making greater use of the flexibility or plasticity of the language to achieve an effective union of the language of conversation and the language of literature. In these plays he breaks away from the reliance on the *eth* ending as a kind of mechanical tool and achieves stress, sound, and meaning instead through a freer grammatical usage, a more subtle distribution of words and use of diction, and through the use of metrical innovations.”

¹⁹ Over 2,000 according to the *Oxford English Dictionary* (see Jucker 2000, p. 51), a figure which some think is an overestimate because the original compilers of that dictionary in the late nineteenth century were more inclined to use Shakespeare’s works as a source than those of his contemporaries. Recent research has discovered many words attributed to Shakespeare in earlier documents (see Hope 1999). A slightly lower figure often cited today is 1,700.

²⁰ To cite Bryson (2007, p. 18), “Of the approximately three thousand plays thought to have been staged in London from about the time of Shakespeare’s birth to the closure of the theatres by the Puritans in a coup of joylessness in 1642, 80 per cent are known only by title. Only 230 or so play texts still exist from Shakespeare’s time, including the thirty-eight by Shakespeare himself – about 15 per cent of the total, a gloriously staggering proportion.”

it still shows that he was certainly no linguistic conservative and, if not the actual coiner of a given word, was typically an eager early-adopter. With this propensity to use ad hoc forms and, through invention and experimentation, negotiate new norms, on Table 1 above, Shakespeare would naturally gravitate more to the ELF side of the linguacultural norms than to the NES Standard.

2.2. Objectives

As regards the objectives listed on Table 1, it would, at first sight, seem fairly clear that Shakespeare's English fits most easily with NES Standard, as it is presumably used for integration, membership in the NES community. However, one of the failings of the whole EFL approach (which, as we say in 2.0, can be associated with the idea of the NES Standard) as also mentioned by Seidlhofer (2011) or Christiansen (2018) is that, even today, it rests on the dubious assumption that there exists a *single* NES community using a *single* variety (i.e. a standard).

Most scholars agree that Shakespeare grew up in a small market town in the West Midlands region of England eventually appearing as a young man in London, much smaller than today but already a bustling multilingual and multiethnic city. Throughout his life, he would no doubt have been exposed to different varieties of NES English; at school, he undoubtedly learnt Latin and Greek, and, in London, he must have frequently encountered other more modern languages too.²¹ Indeed, as Christiansen (2014) points out, Stratford itself was found on important wool route very close to the boundary of three major Middle English dialect areas and thus, even if he had never left his hometown, he would have had the opportunity there to be exposed to different varieties.

Regional variation in the Early Modern period was much greater than that found today. For example, Caxton, in his "Boke of Eneydos" (c.1490) tells the tale of some Northern English merchants being stranded on the Kent side of the Thames Estuary who had difficulty in buying "eggys" (the word for eggs in their Northern variety) because they did not know the Southern English word ("eyren").²² This well-known story shows that, during the Middle English period at least, England was hardly a homogenous speech community and there were certainly occasions when communication between

²¹ It is widely supposed that he knew Italian or French at least because some of his works are based on Italian works which he may have read in the original Italian or in French translation – see Mullan (2016). As we shall see in Section 2.3, in *Henry V*, some of the dialogue is in French.

²² In fact, the modern Standard form *egg* is originally Old Norse and displaced *ey* Old English (Anglo Saxon) in the Middle English period. See Baugh and Cable (1993, pp. 191-192).

NESs resembled that between NNEs or between NNEs and NESs as typical of ELF contexts today.

Shakespeare was living a hundred years or more after the time of Caxton's anecdote but it can be assumed that little had changed as reflected in the loose adherence to linguistic norms evidenced in his writing discussed in Section 2.1. Regarding Shakespeare's use of specific elements from different regional dialects of English, in addition to his native Warwickshire, it is reasonable to suppose that, in London, many different varieties of English were being used and Shakespeare would have been exposed to them. In addition, of course, in his notorious "lost years" (1585-92), it is possible that he was travelling round to different parts of Britain,²³ perhaps even abroad. It is however difficult to verify any of this, mainly because very little reliable information is recorded about the various dialects of his time. The situation is complicated by the fact that many unfamiliar words have been described as dialect from Warwickshire or from areas close by simply because Shakespeare used them.²⁴ More recent research has found that such Shakespearean terms as *mazzard* (a type of cherry and used as a slang word for head) used in *Hamlet* and *Othello*, originally assumed to be, like Shakespeare, distinctly Warwickshire in origin, are also used by other writers from elsewhere in England.²⁵ It has proven difficult to establish whether or not many expressions used by Shakespeare are from Warwickshire and the same can be said of any other regional terms that he may use from other areas of England, or the British Isles in general.

One can however collect data on Shakespeare's use of elements of languages other than English, that is, on his translanguaging (see Section 2.3). Crystal and Crystal (2008) identify four basic categories of use of languages and dialects: lexis, expressions,²⁶ pronunciation and mock (i.e. elements used humorously in imitation of a language or variety)²⁷ from six distinct languages: French, Latin, Spanish / Italian, Irish, Scots and Welsh.²⁸ In Figure 5, we give a summary of their results:

²³ One popular theory has him as a recusant Catholic and private tutor in Lancashire in this period (see Bryson 2007, pp. 56-60).

²⁴ And here considerations of Shakespeare's identity came into play: whether he really was who most people believe him to be or one of the other alternatives put forward (see footnote above).

²⁵ See Barber (2016).

²⁶ E.g. "*veni, vidi, vici*", *Julius Caesar*

²⁷ E.g. mock French "*couple à gorge*" ("to cut the throat") *Henry V*

²⁸ In the case of the last three, it is unclear whether Crystal and Crystal are talking about the English from these areas (e.g. Scots) or the local Celtic language (e.g. Gaelic). Seeing however that in all three they limit themselves to pronunciation, this is not a serious omission.



Figure 5
Languages and dialects in Shakespeare's plays (Crystal, Crystal 2008).

As can be seen, overall, when Shakespeare does not use English, his main sources for lexis are French and Latin, together, to a lesser degree, with Italian / Spanish. Latin is the main source for expressions. As regards pronunciation, when in effect he has characters speak in a regional or foreign accent, Shakespeare seems to favour Welsh, then French and to a smaller extent Scottish and Irish. The high figure for Welsh (all instances found in *Henry V* or *Merry Wives of Windsor*) seems surprising – not least considering his lower use of Scottish pronunciation even though he set a whole play (*Macbeth*) in Scotland²⁹ – until one remembers that Shakespeare was from the West Midlands, which borders onto Wales, and thus was perhaps more familiar with Welsh accents.³⁰

The specific issue of whether Shakespeare is more oriented towards intelligibility and communication in a community made up of NESs of different varieties of English in an analogous way to ELF contexts than towards integration and membership in another speech community in a way reminiscent of NES Standard is best discussed in the context of the bottom row

²⁹ Perhaps with *Macbeth*, the fact that Shakespeare's new king and patron was himself Scottish made him wary of risking *lèse-majesté* by attempting any Scottish accents. Indeed, all the examples of Scottish features that Crystal and Crystal identify are from *Henry V*, presumably written in 1598-9.

³⁰ In Anglo Saxon times, Stratford-upon-Avon was situated in the kingdom of Mercia (Old English *Miercna rīce*: "border people"). Indeed, more specifically, it was on the north east border of the West Saxon subkingdom of Hwicce (covering parts of what today are Avon, Gloucestershire, Worcestershire, and South West Warwickshire), which seems to have been populated by a large British (Celtic) community long after the Anglo-Saxon conquest.

of Seidlhofer's table (Table 1), which deals with processes: accommodation and adaptation. This we will do in the next subsection.

2.3. Processes

As we have pointed out in Section 2.1., the fact that Shakespeare is such a linguistic innovator willing to use new syntactical devices and structures and above all a coiner, or at least an enthusiastic early-adopter, of so much new lexis shows that he was no mere imitator or slavish adopter of other peoples' norms in a way analogous to an avid adherent to the NES Standard or a traditional foreign language learner.

On her table of the conceptual differences between NES Standard and ELF (Table 1), Seidlhofer highlights two processes that she associates with Lingua Franca (ELF): accommodation and adaptation. *Speech (or later Communication) Accommodation Theory* (Giles, Smith 1979) has it that, in speech events, speakers will tend to either converge with the other participants (e.g. broadly adopt the same or similar linguistic features), or diverge from them. The former is motivated by a wish to associate oneself with one's interlocutors, the latter by a wish to distant oneself from them. On Table 1, accommodation in this sense could also be seen as allied to the processes of imitation and adoption (e.g. the desire of a non standard variety user or foreign language learner to fit in with the NES Standard using community). However, this is not real accommodation as it is one-sided; little if any tolerance is shown by the NES towards the learner's variation of English, which, as we say in 1.0, when it differs from the NES norm, is typically dismissed as an aberration. In ELF contexts however, accommodation is ideally two-sided, with each participant making allowances for the other. Indeed, even NES may end up using some Non-Standard forms originally used by NNEs such as "Last October I had the *possibility* to attend a workshop" (Forche 2012, p. 468).

Of course, with Shakespeare, we have in essence only a monologue. Although he is obviously communicating with other people, his audience and readership, we do not see him actually indulging in two-way interaction with anyone else; only the semblance of such dialogue when his characters talk to each other, which is however a fabrication, not an example of authentic discourse between different speakers. Nonetheless, Accommodation Theory has been applied to some of Shakespeare's dialogues concentrating on the way that his characters may deliberately try to converge linguistically with other characters (e.g. Armando's letter describing Costard's meeting with Jaquenetta in Act 1, Scene 1, *Love's Labour's Lost* – Keller 2009, pp. 113-114). Some imitation of accommodation, which in this case involves translanguaging, can also be found in *King Henry V* where some of the dialogue, especially that

involving Princess Katherine, is in French, in particular Act V, Scene II where King Henry proposes to her (Example 3):

3) KATHERINE. Is it possible dat I sould love de enemy of France?

KING HENRY. No, it is not possible you should love the enemy of France, Kate, but in loving me you should love the friend of France; for I love France so well that I will not part with a village of it; I will have it all mine. And, Kate, when France is mine and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine.

KATHERINE. I cannot tell vat is dat.

KING HENRY. No, Kate? I will tell thee in French, which I am sure will hang upon my tongue like a new-married wife about her husband's neck, hardly to be shook off. **Je quand sur le**

possession de France, et quand vous avez le possession de moi-

let me see, what then? Saint Denis be my speed!- **donc votre est**

France et vous etes mienne. It is as easy for me, Kate, to

conquer the kingdom as to speak so much more French: I shall never move thee in French, unless it be to laugh at me.

KATHERINE. **Sauf votre honneur, le Francais que vous parlez, il est meilleur que l'Anglais lequel je parle.**

KING HENRY. No, faith, is't not, Kate; but thy speaking of my tongue, and I thine, most truly falsely, must needs be granted to be much at one. But, Kate, dost thou understand thus much English- Canst thou love me?

KATHERINE. I cannot tell.

(Henry V)

Switching from one language to another, is of course, a kind of accommodation on the parts of both King Henry and Katherine. Shakespeare has both use versions of each other's languages that clearly do not conform to any native speaker standard. Nonetheless, communication continues because each is making allowances for the other, processing the marked versions of their language which the other produces and responding appropriately. For example, in the first line, it seems that Shakespeare wants Katherine to be played with a strong French accent. King Henry does not ask her to repeat or request clarification or attempt to correct her, but replies as if there was nothing marked about her English at all. When, later on in her penultimate turn, she speaks in French, he answers in English as if she had addressed him in that language. This kind of discourse, albeit fabricated, shows that Shakespeare is at least aware of the kind of contexts where inter-linguistic accommodation of the kind that Seidlhofer associates with ELF could occur and how it might manifest itself.

The translanguaging (Garcia and Li 2014) in Example 3, is not only there as a manifestation of linguistic accommodation, it also has a definite

interpersonal dimension. King Henry switches from English to French not only to communicate his message more effectively to Katherine but also as a sign that he wants to ingratiate himself (converge) with her. It has the desired effect and she even compliments him on his French. It is interesting that, in the next line, he continues in English (perhaps because Shakespeare does not want to risk excluding the audience from more of the dialogue than necessary) and she in return replies in English. On face value then, King Henry's use of French has as much an interpersonal function (a way of facilitating interpersonal and social interactions) as an ideational one (a way of representing ideas about the world).³¹

On a more general level, the linguistic eclecticism highlighted in Section 2.1 constitutes in itself accommodation of sorts as it is the product of Shakespeare modifying his own language presumably to converge with that of his audience seeing that the general observable trend is for him to increasingly use forms which had then become mainstream. Of course, it is also possible that in some respects, he was in fact diverging – as would be the case initially if he were a trendsetter because initiating a change implies abandoning an existing norm.

Adaptation is one of the main ways in which accommodation manifests itself. In essence, it involves the adjustment and selection of linguistic resources. In ELF contexts, adaption comes about mainly in order to increase the communicative efficacy of the message in respect to the other interlocutors, but social linguistic factors like the desire to either fit in (converge) or set oneself apart (diverge) from a certain group may also play a part. Inherent in the idea of adaption is the concept of negotiation, of empathizing with the other interlocutors, understanding their communicative needs and experimenting how best to satisfy them (or perhaps how best not to, as the case may be). Again, the shifts in Shakespeare's linguistic behaviour, his gradual increasing use of certain structures rather than others, as discussed in Section 2.1, seem to answer the description of adaptation. Whether one decides he is an early adopter actively promoting such forms or a linguistic conservative only begrudgingly introducing more modern forms slowly does not change the fact that he is modifying his language in response to consideration, at some level, of the needs of the rest of the wider speech community.³²

Another place that adaption is evident is in Shakespeare's coinage or early use of neologisms. As we say above in Section 2.1., Shakespeare is credited with being the first recorded source of approximately 1,700 new items

³¹ See Halliday (2014, p. 263) on the so-called metafunctions of language.

³² Indeed, even if the chronology we use in Section 2.1 is wrong, and his use of archaic forms is not correlated to the passage of time at all, the mixture of different forms still constitutes accommodation in that he is alternately converging and diverging from certain members of the speech community, albeit according to a criterion that we have not here identified.

of lexis, many of which are still in frequent use today (to name but six: *accommodation*, *addiction*, *bloody*, *critical*, *obscene*, and *suspicious*).

Looking at these items and how they are formed shows the process of adaptation at work, because such words are typically modifications of other items (usually other parts of speech) which has the advantage of needing no specific explanation as the audience / readers can usually arrive at the meaning via not only the context but also their knowledge of the existing form:

- 4) Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff,
That **beetles** o'er his base into the sea

(*Hamlet*)

In Example 4, Shakespeare uses the new form *beetles*: “to indicate a cliff’s summit that ‘juts out prominently,’ that ‘projects’ beyond its wave-worn base, like the head of a wooden ‘beetle’ or ‘mallet’.” (Clarke, Cowden 1879). It derives its meaning through association with the contemporary expression “beetle brows” designating prominent eyebrows (an expression Shakespeare also uses in *Romeo and Juliet*). The verb ‘to beetle’ has thus been formed out of a noun phrase. Such a creation is in essence poetic and employed by Shakespeare only once, which makes it highly likely that it is indeed his invention and used just to fit the specific purposes of that particular line: as a way of expressing a complex image economically within the constraints of the meter. Had he written “that beetle-brows o’er his base into the sea” there would have been one too many syllables. By changing the word class of the popular expression into a verb and then abbreviating it, he can be seen to be adapting the language creatively to fit his own communicative needs.

Such a thing is normally associated with literature, but as Seidlhofer / Widdowson (2009) have pointed out, creativity is often also an element of ELF, provided one views examples of forms that diverge from NES Standard not automatically as “errors” but as possible innovations, where the ELF users are beginning to negotiate their own alternative norms better suited to their needs and objectives. Indeed, ELF is manifested not as a distinct variety but as a fluid and spontaneous set of language variations (Widdowson 2015). In such contexts, creativity may involve the novel application of existing forms, rules and principles as illustrated in a way analogous to Example 4. For instance, Christiansen (2016a, p. 44) gives the example of the graffiti “Don’t Happy / Be Worry” painted presumably by an NNEs ELF user which is, according to him, illustrative of what he calls the *manipulation of English*: the deliberate misapplication of norms, in this case arguably for ironic effect. Again, items from one part of speech have in effect been reclassified as another (i.e. the adjective ‘happy’ as a verb; and the verb ‘worry’ as an adjective) in a way that usurps the popular banal and clichéd slogan of the time: “Don’t Worry / Be Happy”.

Another aspect of the new forms found in Shakespeare is the fact that many involve using existing elements, not from English as in Example 4, but from other languages altogether in a process of hybridization. This is apparent in Example 3, most obviously in Katherine's contribution which Shakespeare portrays as heavily accented, for example, "Is it possible *dat* I *sould* love *de* enemy of France?" Such translanguaging, traditionally seen as L1 transfer or even dismissed as *interference*, is also found in ELF contexts where users may unconsciously or consciously mix elements from their own L1 or other common languages not only to be more communicative in a given context but also perhaps for the sheer pleasure of making full use of their linguistic repertoire or as a sign of in-group solidarity among a specific group of ELF users who may have other languages in common in addition to English.³³

As we have said, Elizabethan London was a vibrant city. With an estimated population of 200,000 in 1600 making it one of the largest cities in Europe surpassed only by Paris and Naples.³⁴ It was also multiethnic and polyglot. Indeed, it can be imagined that among Shakespeare's circle, languages such as Latin, Greek, and French were widely known as were Spanish, Italian, and perhaps also Dutch and German. There is strong evidence that Shakespeare himself knew Latin, Greek and Italian and/or French. By modern standards at least, this is impressive for a man who, while neither poor nor uneducated, was presumably of fairly ordinary origins from a small provincial town. Given the rich linguistic repertoire of his social milieu (as evidenced by Example 3 where he has characters using both English and French), it is not surprising that he indulged in translanguaging when coining words or at least readily adopted new words that were the product of such a process.

Shakespeare anglicises many words from other languages, most notably perhaps Latin. For example, from Latin *articulus*, *cadens*, and *convire* he creates the English *articulate*, *cadent* and *convive*. From Italian *incarnardino* and *rigolo* he makes *incarnardine* (a carnation-red colour) and *rigol* (a small circle) and from Old Norse he takes *krant* / *krantz* and invents *crant* (a garland).³⁵ At times, Shakespeare shows a great deal of sophistication and creativity in his translanguaging. For example, from the Latin noun *stella* he forms the adjective *stelled* (starry) and he constructs the adjective *unsisting* ("unstill" or "never-resting") from the Latin verb *sistere* ("to stand still") negating it by means of the English prefix *un*. Revealingly, Shakespeare seems confident enough to use such products of translanguaging for comic effect,

³³ See Christiansen (2016b) on the localisation of ELF and the way that ELF users in particular linguistic contexts such as Italy may use the local language not only for communicative expedience but also to identify themselves as residents of that area or L2 users of that language.

³⁴ Bryson (2007, p. 45)

³⁵ The examples in this paragraph are from Clarke and Cowden (1879).

indicating that he expects a high degree of linguistic sophistication also from his audience. For instance in *Henry V*, he uses *bubukles*, a compound of French *bube* (a “botch” or “sore”) and *buccal* (Latin *bucca*: “cheek”), meaning “cheek-blotch.”

Such hybrid forms, lexical items from one language displaying the morphology of another, are a common feature of English even today, for example, *risqué* (“slightly indecent” from French, literally “risked”), *panini* (a sandwich made with an Italian bun from the Italian plural form of the noun ‘panino’ – literally “little bread” - leading to the redundant English pluralization of *paninis*), or *stein* (a large beer glass, from German *Steinzeug*, “stoneware”). It is particularly common in ELF contexts where speakers living in a given linguacultural context make often make use of words from that area, perhaps anglicising them. For example, international students in Italy, as Christiansen’s study shows (2016b), may pepper their English with Italian words and phrases such as *ciao* (used as a greeting), *ragazzi* (boys, guys), *duomo* (cathedral) and also some hybrid forms such as *colocation* (location of a building), *disposition* (internal layout of a house or flat) or *climatization* (air-conditioning). Such forms are not necessarily used because English lacks equivalents (although in some cases, such as *bonifico* - postal/bank payment order, the item may be particular to the Italian context and thus difficult to find an appropriate English term for) or to fill a gap in the user’s English vocabulary (e.g. *ciao* instead of *hello*), but may rather be employed as a display of affinity with a specific language and culture (in the examples above, those of Italy).

Translanguaging was indeed common in the Early Modern English period. Many writers, such as Thomas Elyot (c. 1490–1546) and George Pettie (1548–1589) enthusiastically used foreign words, especially Latin and Greek, to enrich their English, as may have seemed natural seeing that the Classical languages were still considered the medium for learning. It would be easy to assume that words from both were being transposed into English, because the language was in need of enrichment since it was in some sense a so-called restricted code (Bernstein 1971). However, against this analysis is the fact that, while English had to struggle under the dominance of French for much of the Middle English period, the language not only survived but also thrived in some respects. The strong Old English literary heritage no doubt contributed as it provided solid foundations on which to repose and then to rebuild. It is also clear that in this period, a rich oral tradition or *oralature* (Rosenburg 1987) in English continued through folk songs and ballads, elements of which eventually made their way into literature, for example the figure of Robin Hood. As regards the written word, despite the low status of English, this period saw the production of some notable and original allegorical literature, among which *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*; Langland’s *Piers Plowman*;

together with, of course, the various works of Geoffrey Chaucer.³⁶ All this shows that Middle English had retained the great expressive power of Old English and can hardly be considered a language with only limited resources unequipped to speak about certain things even though some have even argued that it does not represent a direct continuation of Old English at all but is instead the product of creolisation between it and Norman French and / or Norse (Bailey and Maroldt 1977).

A more robust explanation for the sudden opening up of English to other languages is that, in the period after the Renaissance and the Reformation, English was growing in importance and was becoming itself a language of learning and people who would previously have discussed certain matters in Latin or Greek were learning to do so in English, naturally making use of the existing Latin or Greek lexis used in such discourse domains. So widespread was this phenomenon, in essence a kind of translanguaging, that purists such as Thomas Wilson and John Cheke, dismissed those like Elyot and Pettie using anglicised Latin and Greek words as “inkhorns” and bemoaned the way that English was being contaminated as a result. The existence of such enthusiastic, if prejudiced, defenders of English is revealing in that it shows how much the language had grown in stature since the Middle English period.

It is easy to see how Wilson and Cheke’s approach to English is consistent with the NES Standard side of Table 1 above. By contrast, Shakespeare, who clearly was happy to use translanguaging and to adopt and adapt words from other languages in order to increase and supplement the linguistic resources at his disposal, would fit more easily into the Lingua Franca (ELF) side.

3. Conclusions

In answer to the question asked in this paper’s title, it seems clear from our analysis that in the debate between NES Standard and ELF, Shakespeare would most probably stand with the latter. The fact that Shakespeare’s English seems more closely related to ELF variations than to the idea of a NES Standard variety is eye-opening when contrasting on the one hand his elevated status within the literary canon and the fact that he is widely considered to be one of the most proficient users of English with, on the other, the negative attitudes often directed at ordinary ELF users.

³⁶ And, perhaps not coincidentally, a similar process of cultural-linguistic defiance on the part of a once proud people against foreign overlords can be seen in neighbouring Wales in roughly the same period (the 12th to 13th centuries) with parts of the ancient Welsh language oral tradition, also richly allegorical, being written down in the *Mabinogion*.

As we have seen, both Shakespeare and ELF users can be seen to use and adapt English in similar ways, and the latter have arguably more right than NESs to look upon him as a champion and model.

Perhaps it is more important, however, not to consider Shakespeare's contribution as an individual, noteworthy as he is, but instead to focus on how the history of the English language as illustrated in Shakespeare's works can shed light on the advent of ELF and thus in which directions English may continue to evolve. The assumption in much of the literature on ELF is that it is a recent phenomenon, something which has come about through English becoming internationalised and gaining the status of a world or global language. In this way, ELF can be characterised as a new and novel stage in the evolution of English, in the words of Graddol (2010, p. 11):

The new language which is rapidly ousting the language of Shakespeare as the world's lingua franca is English itself – English in its new global form. As this book demonstrates, this is not English as we have known it, and have taught it in the past as a foreign language. It is a new phenomenon, and if it represents any kind of triumph it is probably not a cause of celebration by native speakers.

In the light of our discussion in this paper, it is indeed paradoxical to see “the language of Shakespeare” used as shorthand for NES English and as something to contrast with ELF.³⁷ However, our consideration of Shakespeare, has shown that many of the processes associated with ELF were present even before the language began to spread significantly beyond its native shores and would seem to be a natural part of the way that the language has evolved at least in the periods of Early Modern and Modern English (c. 1500–present) and very plausibly before. Indeed it must be remembered that in the period of Old and Middle English, England and Great Britain were hardly monolingual regions and the various regional varieties of English or Anglo Saxon (already fairly diverse) had to coexist at first with Celtic languages then later with Norse and Norman French. Indeed, as we mention in Section 2.3, some would even argue that Middle English itself is a product of creolisation.³⁸

³⁷ We doubt this interpretation is what Graddol had intended, but his choice of the cliché “language of Shakespeare” (no doubt in implicit imitation of those who espouse the very views he is arguing against) points the reader nonetheless in that direction.

³⁸ See Bailey and Maroldt (1977) who conjecture that Middle English is not a direct descendant of Old English but of a pidgin: in effect, a hybrid restricted language used as a lingua franca by speakers of Old English, Norse and / or Norman French using elements of each. Over time, this pidgin, hitherto only spoken as an L2, became the native language of successive generations. However, the very idea that creoles necessarily evolve out of pidgins has been cast into doubt – see Mulfwene (2001), who sustains that pidgins come about where there is only sporadic contact between communities (e.g. trade), and creoles where there is continuous interaction (e.g. when

The irony is then that much of what today could be called contemporary NES Standard is the product of the same processes that have given rise to ELF. Consequently, ELF does not represent a threat to the “purity” of English. It is instead merely a continuation of the path that English has historically followed and is thus just another manifestation of the intrinsic flexibility and adaptability of English, as evidenced so well in the works of Shakespeare. Indeed, such features are far from unique to English. It has been observed that such languages as English, Chinese and Spanish (the world’s three largest languages in terms of numbers of speakers, L1 and L2, according to www.ethnologue.com) have all been languages that have expanded outside their original speech communities resulting in what Brutt-Griffler (2002) terms *macroacquisition* or *social SLA* (second language acquisition). The fact they were acquired as L2s by adults had a major influence on the way that they subsequently evolved. In particular, they underwent simplification at various linguistic levels and so their modern forms spoken by billions of speakers are considerably less linguistically complex than their older forms (e.g. Old English) which were spoken by smaller communities of exclusively NESs.³⁹

It is indeed the idea of linguistic purity and of an immutable NES Standard, which is, if anything, an aberration. As this article has made clear, had Shakespeare been forced to adhere to the restrictions of a rigid model or standard, his language would have lost much of its dynamism and uniqueness. Consequently, English would have been his prison rather than his garden, which is a metaphor worth dwelling upon because the art of gardening can be seen to involve balancing both nature and nurture in a way reminiscent of processes like accommodation and adaptation. In *The Winter’s Tale*, Shakespeare introduces the topic of the merits of artificial cross-fertilisation of plants and has Polixenes say in Act IV, Scene IV, in reply to Perdita’s scathing remarks about “streaked gillyvors” (gilliflowers or carnations) which she dismisses as unnatural because they are the result of grafting by humans:⁴⁰

one community settles in another’s area). More precisely, the so-called *Middle English creole hypothesis* has been criticised by Thomason and Kaufman (1988), who argue that it greatly exaggerates the differences between Old and Middle English by, in effect, comparing the highly stylised West Saxon written variety of Wessex as an example of the former with examples of Middle English that were inevitably more colloquial seeing that Norman French and Latin were by then commonly used for written texts.

³⁹ See McWhorter (2007), who generalizes that languages spoken by smaller isolated communities tend to be much more complex than those used by larger more dispersed communities where there is more opportunity for contact with other languages, and thus for accommodation and adaptation.

⁴⁰ See Macbride (1899), who credits Shakespeare with being well ahead of his time in his discussion of such a complex matter.

- 5) POLIXENES. [...] Yet nature is made better by no mean
 But nature makes that mean; so over that art
 Which you say adds to nature, is an art
 That nature makes. You see, sweet maid, we marry
 A gentler scion to the wildest stock,
 And make conceive a bark of baser kind
 By bud of nobler race. This is an art
 Which does mend nature- change it rather; but
 The art itself is nature.
 PERDITA. So it is.
 POLIXENES. Then make your garden rich in gillyvors,
 And do not call them bastards.

(The Winter's Tale)

Here Polixenes contends that it is wrong to label cross-fertilisation by grafting unnatural because such intervention is itself based on natural processes. An analogous observation could be made about ELF. Although it may seem as an unnatural manipulation and distortion of something natural and pure in the hands of NNEs (i.e. the NES Standard), it is rather a product of not just of imitation and adoption but also accommodation and adaption (in particular translanguaging), which, as we have seen by looking at the specific case of Shakespeare, are the very same processes by which NESs have created native speaker varieties, among them the so-called Standard, in the first place. ELF, like human intervention in a garden and the grafting of plants, allows the marriage of the “sweeter scion” to the “wildest stock” to conceive “a bark of a baser kind by bud of nobler race,” that is to create a stronger more resilient language more adapted to the challenges of its new role as international lingua franca.. ELF then, is something to be embraced and appreciated rather than dismissed: “Then make your garden rich in gillyvors / And do not call them bastards.”

Bionote: Thomas Christiansen is an associate professor in English Language and Translation at the Università del Salento (Italy) and Director of the University Language Centre. He has taught in various positions at various universities in Apulia (Italy), the UK, and Poland. He completed his PhD in textual linguistics at Salford (UK). He has researched into various areas of linguistics including systemic linguistics and functional grammar, varieties of English, ELF, teaching English, language testing, and analysis of different corpora, including spoken discourse. He has also worked as an expert consultant for Cambridge Assessment English for many years.

Author's address: thomas.christiansen@unisalento.it



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